Joint COMNAP-SCAR Executives' Meeting  
Sofia, Bulgaria – 13 July 2005

The meeting, chaired by COMNAP Chair Gérard Jugie, was held in the Sofia Palace of Culture alongside COMNAP's 2005 annual meeting COMNAP XVII.

W ere present:
for COMNAP: Gérard Jugie (Chair), Yeadong Kim and Henry Valentine (member representatives), Jose Retamales (representing member representative Jorge Berguño), Kim Pitt (SCALOP Chair), Karl Erb (past Chair), John Pye (SCALOP Chair-elect), Antoine Guichard (Executive Secretary) and Catherine Contrepois (Assistant to Gérard Jugie).
for SCAR: Jörn Thiede (President), Jerónimo López-Martínez, Clive Howard-Williams and Chuck Kennicutt (Vice-Presidents), Colin Summerhayes (Executive Director), Marzena Kaczmarska (Executive Officer) and Peter Clarkson (past Executive Secretary).

1. HOBART meeting agenda / scheduling.

COMNAP XVIII and SCAR XXIX are to be held alongside each other in Hobart in July 2006. All agreed on the importance of both organisations being able to benefit from each others' presence through productive interaction. Possible ways to interact were discussed, in particular through joint sessions of the SCALOP Symposium and the SCAR Open Science Conference (OSC).

The opening morning of the SCAR Open Science Conference (Wednesday morning 12 July) will include a series of keynote addresses and the SCAR President extended an invitation for COMNAP to present one of those keynote addresses. The COMNAP Chair kindly accepted the invitation in principle. The COMNAP Executive will discuss possible topics for such address at its October meeting and the COMNAP Chair and SCAR President will continue liaising on the subject.

It was stressed that it would be most valuable for COMNAP members to attend some sessions of the SCAR OSC and for SCAR members to attend some sessions of the SCALOP Symposium. This would require both organisations to schedule appropriate gaps in their respective meeting schedule. This could be looked at in more detail once topics to be presented at both the Symposium and the OSC were known.

It was also noted that more time should if possible be made available next year in Hobart for the joint Executives' meeting.

The COMNAP Chair thanked all for their commitment to a productive interaction between SCAR and COMNAP at the 2006 joint meetings for both organisations' benefit and noted in conclusion that:

COMNAP gladly accepted SCAR's offer to give a keynote address to the SCAR OSC and that its Executive Committee (EXCOM) would discuss possible topics at its October meeting; COMNAP Chair would then liaise with SCAR President to finalise plans.
Organisers of the 2006 meetings should liaise to find ways to schedule appropriate gaps in each organisation's meeting schedule to facilitate cross-attendance at selected open sessions, and report to both Executives.

A process should be put in place to measure, assess and review the interaction between COMNAP and SCAR at their bi-annual joint meetings.

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2. JCADM performance and oversight.

JCADM Chief Officer Taco de Bruin came into the meeting to give a presentation on JCADM's work and progress.

JCADM brings together National Antarctic Data Centres (NADCs) to collaborate on building and maintaining the Antarctic Master Directory (AMD). Hosted by NASA's Global Change Master Directory (GCMD), the AMD consists of a collection of metadata entries giving pointers to corresponding scientific data sets of varying scope and size. Metadata entries are in the Directory Interchange Format (DIF) and are quality controlled and loaded into the AMD by GCMD staff. Not all DIF entries on the AMD point to data sets available on-line. The data sets that are available on-line are not necessarily located on NADC servers, but can for example be located on university servers. Some of the upcoming priorities will be to increase the proportion of data sets described on the AMD that are available on-line (access) as well as ensuring that these remain on-line in the future (legacy).

It was suggested that COMNAP may wish to take advantage of JCADM and use the group for advice on management of data outside its current terms of reference, for example for management of operational data.

The meeting thanked the JCADM Chief Officer for his presentation.

The SCAR Executive Director provided an outline report on the review of JCADM conducted in the last few months.

The review panel consisted mostly of members of the scientific community, including three
Chief Officers of SCAR Standing Scientific Groups (SSGs) or their representatives. The two COMNAP members nominated on the panel could not participate to the review proper as it was scheduled at a time they were not available. They were however made corresponding members and given the opportunity to comment on the documents tabled at the review and on the draft report.

The final report of the review was made available a few weeks ago. It overall gave a positive assessment of JCADM's performance and its benefit to the scientific community. It provided a number of recommendations, including recommendations for improving the interaction with the scientific community and the relations between JCADM and its sponsoring organisations SCAR and COMNAP. JCADM would give a presentation to Scientists at SCAR XXIX and would report more often on its activities.

It also recommended that the current Steering Committee on Antarctic Data Management (STADM) be disbanded and replaced by an advisory board to provide independent scientific advice.

The meeting discussed this outline report on the review and more generally how JCADM and its work relate to both SCAR and COMNAP.

In terms of reporting process, COMNAP noted that STADM had originally been intended as an interface between JCADM, any relevant advisory or review panels and the COMNAP and SCAR Executives. As such, the existence of STADM was still relevant and useful if and when an advisory board was created, and STADM should continue to exist.

In relation to extending JCADM's role to providing data management advice or other services to COMNAP or SCAR, it was stressed that such a change in JCADM's terms of reference would need to be considered and assessed carefully. It was noted that the management of metadata for access to scientific data sets was very different to the management and sharing of dynamic operational information in support of practical, day-to-day “business processes” or science programs.

SCAR suggested the development of a joint SCAR/COMNAP data and information strategy for the scientific community, noting that Article 3c of the Antarctic Treaty required scientific data to be exchanged and made available (Note: Article 3c reads “scientific observations and results from Antarctica shall be exchanged and made freely available”). The Strategy could also deal with the important aspect of legacy of data. It noted that this strategy could cover more than just scientific data and for example include operational data. COMNAP remarked that most of the Treaty requirements for exchange of information concerned non-scientific information and noted that if a strategy was to include more than scientific data and information then it should involve, and probably be led by, the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat.

It was noted that a strategy on scientific data and information would have to involve and leverage on the National Antarctic Data Centres and recognise the national dimension of scientific data and information collection processes. Most NADCs are funded by National Antarctic Programs (NAPs) which can (and some already do) implement mechanisms to motivate their grantees to make their data available. NAPs can for example do this by making scientists not providing data ineligible for future grants or logistics support. But in some countries NAPs are not the only funding mechanisms for Antarctic Science and cannot always impose such conditions on all Antarctic
scientists. COMNAP and SCAR are only part of the system and will not be able to solve the problem alone. It was noted that most new or occasional Antarctic scientists seemed to have already their own structures for cataloging their data, which often were adequate though links would need to be established to the AMD.

COMNAP noted that in view of this COMNAP may not be the best vehicle for developing, implementing and enforcing a strategy on scientific data and information. COMNAP indicated that it would discuss that issue further within COMNAP.

SCAR indicated that it needed to develop a data strategy for the scientific community and would start on it, providing drafts to COMNAP for comments.

COMNAP remarked that a significant proportion of the issues raised today were of an operational and implementation nature where assistance was sought from COMNAP to solve problems with making scientific data accessible to the scientific community and that it would have been valuable to have more operational people on the JCADM review panel.

The COMNAP Chair thanked all for a very productive discussion on scientific data management and noted in conclusion that:

- COMNAP was maintaining its support to JCADM's work for the coming year, including its annual contribution of 1/3 of the USD 10,000.00 paid annually to the GCMD.
- STADM should be maintained as an interface between JCADM, any relevant advisory or review panels and the COMNAP and SCAR Officers.
- COMNAP and SCAR would together review their support of JCADM annually at their joint Executives meeting, after receipt of JCADM's annual report at least one month beforehand.
- External review of JCADM would be conducted regularly, possibly every three years, and it would be valuable for review panels to include some operational people.
- COMNAP's Executive Committee (EXCOM) would discuss in detail the issue of Scientific data management at its October meeting and would explore ways for COMNAP and NAPs to support population of the AMD and the long-term on-line availability of data sets described on the AMD.
- COMNAP was happy to review drafts of a SCAR strategy on Scientific Data and Information for the scientific community, stressing that SCAR and COMNAP were only part of the system.
- SCAR and COMNAP should work together to consider possible changes to the JCADM Terms of Reference.

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COMNAP Exec to review drafts of SCAR strategy on Scientific Data and Information for the scientific community.

SCAR and COMNAP to review JCADM ToRs.

3. MEDINET and EG HB&M collaboration.

The SCAR Executive had tasked its Expert Group on Human Biology and Medicine (EG HB&M) to provide a report and recommendations on a possible merger with COMNAP's Medical Officers Network (MEDINET).

The COMNAP Chair reminded the meeting that COMNAP's MEDINET was an operational group focused on practical medical issues in support of NAP's field activities only and not conducting research. MEDINET was composed of NAP staff and given by COMNAP specific tasks corresponding to practical, real needs faced by NAPs in their support of Antarctic operations. It worked for example on common standards for medical screening, on medical evacuations, etc... MEDINET had made good progress this last year on its tasks and had organised a workshop in Sofia early in the week to organise further progress on these important tasks.

Although some persons were members of both groups, it was in different capacities and under quite different conditions. One group was a task group responding to instructions from employers to address practical “business” needs while the other group was a research group granted, as it should, a relative freedom in its membership, its decision making and the scope of its activities.

COMNAP was however happy for both groups to have joint meetings from time to time to discuss issues of common interest and provide a communication channel between operational medicine and applied research when appropriate. MEDINET had this week after its workshop organised a joint meeting with SCAR's EG HB&M which was deemed successful.

The COMNAP Chair noted in conclusion that:

MEDINET and EG HB&M served very different functions and should until further notice remain separate, but that joint meetings from time to time on appropriate topics of mutual interest should be encouraged.

Organisation of a second joint meeting of the two groups in Hobart in 2006 should be supported, should both groups already hold their own meetings on the margins of COMNAP XVIII and SCAR XXIX.

Actions:

COMNAP and SCAR to support and facilitate the organisation of a joint meeting of MEDINET and EG HB&M in Hobart in July 2006, should both groups already hold their own meetings on the margins of COMNAP XVIII and SCAR XXIX.
4. Preparation of joint papers for ATCM and CEP

Both organisations agreed on the value of collaborating, when appropriate, on papers for the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings (ATCMs) and meetings of the Treaty's Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP). It was noted that submission of joint papers on issues that fall within both COMNAP and SCAR's areas of expertise gave a valuable, positive message about both organisations' commitment to work together to serve the Antarctic Treaty System. It was however noted that collaboration was not always easy nor possible, partly because of the marked differences in the way both organisations have to work internally. It was sometimes possible to collaborate, sometimes not. It was also noted that it was not always possible to solve science problems with logistics. We should always assess case by case if collaboration is indeed appropriate and beneficial.

The COMNAP Chair extended to SCAR an invitation to send a representative to plenary sessions on the last day of COMNAP annual meetings when COMNAP and its groups discussed the possible preparation of papers for upcoming ATCM and CEP meetings. This would facilitate the identification of papers where collaboration would be appropriate and beneficial.

The SCAR President kindly accepted the invitation but noted that unfortunately no adequate member of SCAR would be available this coming Friday for the last plenary sessions of COMNAP XVII. In any case, both organisations' secretariats should exchange information about papers considered for submission to upcoming ATCM and CEP meetings.

SCAR noted that it was to work on the issue of marine noise and asked if COMNAP planned to work on operational aspects of that issue. COMNAP confirmed that it was on the agenda of today's meeting of its Working Group on Ship Operations (SHIPOPS) and that the group was looking at collecting practical information on “noise-generating” equipment present on ships and the way it was used. Results of the survey would be forwarded to SCAR. SCAR offered to provide COMNAP with details of the Cadiz, Spain, workshop that it planned to hold in January on the topic of acoustics and marine mammals.

The COMNAP Chair thanked all for the discussion and noted in conclusion that:

- The COMNAP and SCAR Secretariats should exchange information about papers that each organisation was considering for submission to upcoming ATCM and CEP meetings, for discussion and relay to their Executives. This would facilitate the identification of papers where collaboration would be appropriate and beneficial.
- COMNAP invited a SCAR representative to attend the last plenary sessions of COMNAP XVIII in Hobart on Friday 14 July 2006 when COMNAP and its groups would discuss the possible preparation of papers for upcoming ATCM and CEP meetings. This would facilitate the identification of papers where collaboration would be appropriate and beneficial.
- Submission of joint papers on issues that fell within both COMNAP and SCAR's areas of expertise gave a valuable, positive message about both organisations' commitment to work together to serve the Antarctic Treaty System. But to guarantee effectiveness, we should always assess case by case if collaboration is indeed appropriate and beneficial.
- COMNAP would forward to SCAR the results of a survey on “noise-generating” equipment present on ships and the way it was used.
SCAR would forward to COMNAP an invitation to participate in the Cadiz, Spain, workshop on acoustics.

Actions:

COMNAP and SCAR Secretariats to exchange information about papers that each organisation is considering for submission to upcoming ATCM and CEP meetings, for discussion and relay to their Executives.

SCAR to send a representative to the last plenary sessions of COMNAP XVIII in Hobart on Friday 14 July 2006 when COMNAP and its groups would discuss the possible preparation of papers for upcoming ATCM and CEP meetings.

COMNAP and SCAR to assess case by case if collaboration on any paper for ATCM or CEP is indeed appropriate and beneficial.

COMNAP to forward to SCAR the results of a survey on “noise-generating” equipment present on ships and the way it was used.

SCAR to invite COMNAP to participate in the Cadiz, Spain, workshop on acoustics.

5. Scientific/Logistics Presentation at ATCM

The COMNAP Chair congratulated SCAR for a very successful scientific presentation at ATCM XXVIII in Stockholm and noted that it had adequately and successfully recognised the existence and value of the support to science provided by NAPs and COMNAP.

The SCAR President explained that SCAR had chosen for next year's presentation (to ATCM XXIX in Edinburgh) the topic of ice drilling and that it was obviously a topic were logistics and technical support provided by NAPs was both important and relatively easy to convey. The speaker, once chosen, should liaise with COMNAP to discuss how this support could be conveyed in the presentation.

The COMNAP Chair noted in conclusion that:

COMNAP would remain available to assist SCAR with its presentations to ATCMs, in particular in relation to incorporating operational material and to conveying the nature and importance of logistics and other technical support provided by NAPs and COMNAP.

The COMNAP Chair and SCAR President should remain in contact to define directions for, and scope of, collaboration on these presentations to ATCMs.

The designated speaker should liaise with the COMNAP Chair and Executive Secretary for practical details on how COMNAP can support her/his talk.

Actions:
COMNAP to remain available to assist SCAR with its presentations to ATCMs, in particular in relation to incorporating operational material and to conveying the nature and importance of logistics and other technical support provided by NAPs and COMNAP.

COMNAP Chair and SCAR President to remain in contact to define directions for, and scope of, collaboration on SCAR Scientific presentations to ATCMs.

Speaker designated by SCAR to give the 2006 Scientific presentation to ATCM (on ice drilling) to liaise with the COMNAP Chair and Executive Secretary for practical details on how COMNAP can support her/his talk.

6. SCAR/COMNAP Texas workshop on practical biological indicators of human impacts in Antarctica

SCAR Vice President Chuck Kennicutt, gave a brief overview of the workshop he had organised in March 2005 on Practical Biological Indicators of Human Impacts in Antarctica. The workshop was sponsored by the USA's National Science Foundation, COMNAP and SCAR. It was productive and successful and a full report was now ready for consideration by both COMNAP and SCAR. Volume 1 had just been published and the first few copies had been made available in the last few days. A copy was provided for the COMNAP Chair, during the meeting. This first volume contained a report on the workshop's deliberations and recommendations. The second volume will incorporate papers prepared for and tabled at the workshop.

It was noted that the relevant COMNAP and SCAR groups would now review the workshop results and recommendations and discuss how these should be taken forward. The workshop outcomes would probably be conveyed to the CEP and ATCM through a joint COMNAP/SCAR paper to CEP IX (Edinburgh, June 2006).

It was clear that the workshop had been a success with productive deliberations and valuable outcomes.

The COMNAP Chair thanked Chuck Kennicutt for his report and for his considerable work in organising and supporting the successful workshop in conjunction with SCAR's David Walton and COMNAP's Rod Downie. He asked Chuck Kennicutt to convey SCAR and COMNAP's appreciation to all workshop participants. He noted in conclusion that:

- The workshop results would now be reviewed separately by COMNAP and SCAR's appropriate groups to discuss how these should be taken forward.
- These groups' work would then be reviewed by each Executive.
- The COMNAP Executive Committee was to conduct this review at its upcoming October meeting and forward it the COMNAP membership for comments and endorsement.
- COMNAP and SCAR should then discuss possible plans for preparation of a joint COMNAP/SCAR paper presenting the outcomes of the workshop and subsequent work to CEP IX. We should have a clear plan by the end of December 2005.

Actions:
Appropriate COMNAP and SCAR groups to separately review the results of the March 2005 workshop on practical biological indicators of human impacts in Antarctica and report to their respective Executive.

COMNAP and SCAR Executives to review the work of their groups, then discuss possible plans for preparation of a joint COMNAP/SCAR paper presenting the outcomes of the workshop and subsequent work to CEP IX.

7. IPY implementation

The COMNAP Chair noted that a full COMNAP plenary dedicated to IPY implementation was scheduled for the next day. He confirmed that SCAR Executive members were most welcome to attend that session which should clarify a number of issues about where and how COMNAP can support implementation of the IPY. He stressed that time was running out with many deadlines for application for NAP support over 2007-2009 already behind us or approaching fast. COMNAP had conducted a number of surveys on operational capabilities available from NAPs over 2007-2009, in particular ships, planes and ground traverses. This would assist in assessing if and how IPY science programs could be supported once these were formulated. It was remarked that the surveys conducted indicated that in general NAPs would not receive additional funding nor have access to additional logistic capabilities over 2007-2009. It was hence not clear to which extent “additional” IPY science programs could be supported once commitments have been made to support programs already formulated, assessed and accepted through national channels.

The SCAR President invited COMNAP to make use of the SCAR participation in the ICSU/WMO Joint Committee that was steering the IPY process.

8. Any other business

Joint COMNAP-SCAR Brochure

An update was provided on the proposed joint COMNAP-SCAR brochure. A first draft had been prepared. COMNAP was in the process of rewriting material describing its mission and activities for improved clarity and consistency. This would be incorporated in an updated draft of the joint brochure as soon as possible.

COMNAP Chair Gérard Jugie stressed the importance of producing a joint brochure for the long term, with a clear, consistent and simple message about the roles of each organisation and the way they can and do work together in support of Antarctic Science and of the Antarctic Treaty System. He noted in conclusion that:

The COMNAP secretariat would endeavour to complete as quickly as possible, in conjunction with the COMNAP Executive Committee, the preparation of updated COMNAP wording for a clear, consistent and simple joint COMNAP-SCAR brochure.

Actions:
COMNAP secretariat to complete as quickly as possible, in conjunction with the COMNAP Executive Committee, the preparation of updated COMNAP wording for a clear, consistent and simple joint COMNAP-SCAR brochure.

INFONET

There was a brief discussion of COMNAP Information Officers Network (INFONET). Whilst SCAR was looking at opportunities for capacity building, COMNAP advised that this was not part of the role of INFONET. However, it was agreed that SCAR would be invited to attend the proposed INFONET workshop in Washington in the coming year to help understanding on how INFONET is developing...

9. Close

The COMNAP Chair thanked all participants for a productive meeting and noted that he looked forward to a productive collaboration between COMNAP and SCAR in 2005-2006, due to culminate in a number of joint meetings in Hobart in July 2006. He asked the COMNAP Executive Secretary to provide minutes of the meeting quickly and closed the meeting.

Actions:

COMNAP Executive Secretary to provide minutes of the meeting quickly.

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Annexes:

Annex 1:
Actions arising from Sofia's Joint COMNAP-SCAR Executives Meeting (Wed 13 July 2005)

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